Catalogue of American Amphibians and Reptiles.

AUFFENBERG, WALTER AND RICHARD FRANZ. 1978. *Gopherus flavomarginatus*.

Gopherus flavomarginatus Legler
Bolson tortoise

Gopherus flavomarginatus Legler, 1959:337. Type-locality, "30 to 40 miles north from Lerdo, Durango, Mexico." Holotype, U.S. Nat. Mus. 61253, stuffed specimen with disassociated skull, immature female, collected by A. Busck (examined by senior author).

Gopherus polyphemus flavomarginatus: Wermuth and Mertens, 1961:371. See REMARKS in Auffenberg and Franz (1978).

• CONTENT. No subspecies are recognized.

• DEFINITION. Adults are 225–370 mm in carapace length, with a low, broadly oval shell, flat on top and broad, and considerably flared along the latero-posterior border. The cervical scute is often divided to form 2–3 scutes. The gular projections are obtuse, only slightly notched anteriorly at the midline. Ossicles of the forelimbs are large, flattened, and often fused in large specimens; the antibrachial scales are only very slightly imbricate, more so in juveniles. The axillary scale is essentially rectangular. The head is moderately wide and its width is 54–81% of hind foot width. Skin color varies from grey to grey-brown, often with fine black punctations. Shell ground color ranges from pale yellow to light yellowish brown, and the carapacial laminae contain darker (brown to black) centers, particularly on the sides. The ground color of the marginal scales is generally lighter than that of the carapace, and the black areolae contrast sharply with the lighter background in both juveniles and adults. The plastron has sharply contrasting dark blotches in young specimens, but becomes nearly immaculate yellow with age. Females tend to be smaller than males with less concave plastron, very slightly shorter gular projections, short, blunt tails that terminate at the level of the cloaca. The longer, more acute tail of the male is provided with an enlarged scale (or small group) forming a pronounced tip.

• DESCRIPTIONS. A definitive description is found in Legler (1959); anatomy, habitat, and courtship are discussed by Legler and Webb (1961); habitat by Pawley (1968); carpus by Auffenberg (1966); os transiliens by Legler (1962) and Bramble (1974); analysis of mental glands by Rose et al. (1969).

• ILLUSTRATIONS. Photographs of adults are found in Legler (1959), Pritchard (1967), and Pawley (1968); habitat in Legler and Webb (1961).

• DISTRIBUTION. Extant populations are confined to the bolson areas of northeastern Durango and adjacent Chichuahua and Coahuila, Mexico.

• FOSSIL RECORD. *Gopherus flavomarginatus* is known from the Pleistocene of Aguascalientes, Mexico (unpublished, identification by W. Auffenberg).

• PERTINENT LITERATURE. The most inclusive data are found in Legler (1959) and Legler and Webb (1961). For a general account in the wild, see Pawley (1968). Olfactory behavior is described by Eglis (1962); plasma albumins by Masat and Dessauer (1968); regulation of urea-biosynthesis enzymes by Mora et al. (1965), relationship to man by Pawley (1975), parasites by Petter and Douglass (1976).

• ETYMOLOGY. The specific name is from the Latin *flavus*, golden yellow or yellow, and *marginatus*, a border, in reference to the color of the marginal scales.

COMMENT

The existence of this Mexican tortoise was apparently known to Duges (1888), but he mistook it for *G. polyphemus*.

Grant (1960) believed *G. flavomarginatus* was closely related to *G. agassizi*, but Legler (1959) and Auffenberg (1966) place it close to *G. polyphemus*. The last placement is substantiated by a recent study of many osteological characters (Auffenberg, 1976).

The species is protected by Mexican law.

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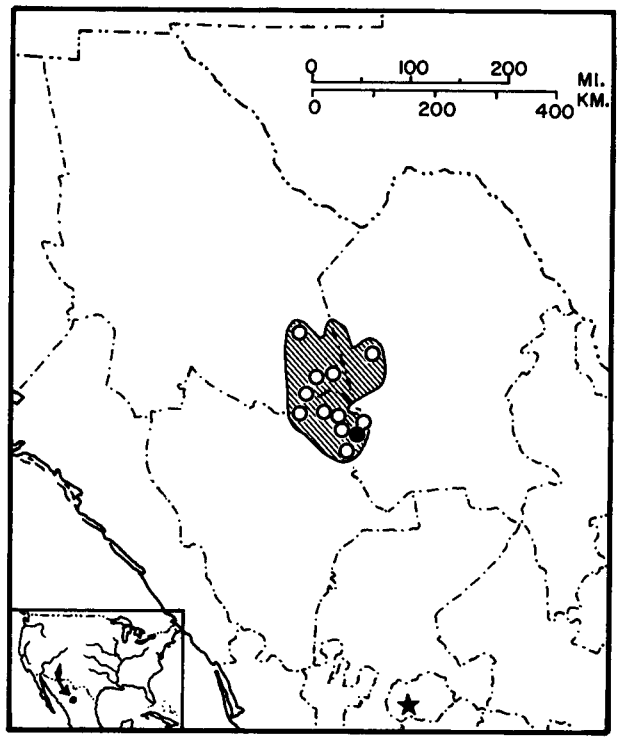

MAP. The solid circle marks the type-locality; open circles indicate other localities. The star marks a Pleistocene fossil record.

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